

After Midnight Thoughts

On Leopold Godowsky.

etc.

By Paul Howard.

To The Members of The International Godowsky.

Instalment 11.

Transcendentalizations.

The mention of the Strauss “Kunsterleben” brings us to the many fine transcriptions by the Master of other composers’ works. Quoting from Instal. 1:-

“His paraphrases and transcriptions have enriched the literature of the piano amazingly. Liebling has spoken of his god-like charitableness. With God-like charitableness Godowsky has so often stooped by the way and taken some small gem by an almost forgotten composer (who did not know what fingers were going to attain, nor what the piano would become) and by a touch of his magic wand has transformed it into a thing of radiant beauty, and given a further lease of life for centuries to come to the composer’s name.”

Friend Sorabji pays a remarkable tribute to Godowsky’s adaptations and transcriptions. Please turn back to enclosure with Instalment 2.

The full list of Godowsky’s works includes all the free transcriptions. Here are extracts from letters I have written on some of them.

THE SCHUBERT-GODOWSKY “CRADLE SONG”.

4th. april, 1940.

Dear Mr. Ringer,

These enclosures I hope will cause you to complete the slip attached to the leaflet concerning this Society and send it to me.

While I play nearly all Godowsky’s original compositions, I think I play the Cradle Song, dedicated to you, more often than anything else, and I think the Master must have had a deep regard for you, which is no doubt reciprocated.

Some myopic critics berate the addition of a chromatic figure to this devine melody of Schubert’s, but they lack sense, understanding, poetry, and perspective.

Every note in the whole fabric of that exquisitely ravishing work must be placed in its exact perspective, in a landscape which reaches in its three dimensional atmosphere from the foot-lights to an horizon further off than Parnassus.

They fail to realise that the additions are but palest-tinted musings, thoughts as fugitive as the misty tints in an early morning forest.

Some soulless materialistic pianists will thump out every note because it in on the paper, leaving as little perspective as the printing ink possesses.

Then an equally stupid critic blames the immortal master, Godowsky, for the interpreter’s stupidity, and the said critic blazons the fault finding in the “Daily Howl” and the “Daily Howl’s”

readers are fed on error.

By luck I have discovered two of these enemies referred to in Godowsky's Preface to the songs, and am slyly arguing the point with thme. The Cradle Song certainly is a master work of the first importance in everything that is exquisite and delicate in independent part playing, and calls for transcendental pedaling. z

It is thrilling to watch activities of this Society taking form in various parts of the world.

Ernest Hutcheson said he would make a point of using the works in his teaching. My old friend Benjamin Dale, now warden of the Royal Academy, said he intends to keep his membership pledge and will see the works are used by the teaching staff there. Same with Bourguignon in Brussels, and Isidor Philipp in Paris, and Colin Taylor in Cape Town University, Irving Scherke, and so on, in nearly every principal city of the world. In response to an invitation to join us Professor Archy Rosenthal, recently arrived in Australia, said, "I cannot tell you what joy your letter gave me. I have long been irritated and depressed by the lack of appreciation of this great man. Others perhaps have somewhat approached his distinction in playing, but as a composer he stands alone on a peak. The glory of the piano." And later to Kenneth Wilkinson of the Sydney Morning Herald here he said, "Godowsky is the greatest thing that has ever happened in the history of the world."

And he backs up his convictions too by playing Godowsky programmes over the air. Last Friday he played some of the Renaissance and four of the Traikontameron, and on April 11th is playing the Kunstlerleben over the air.

Hoping, dear Doctor, to hear from you in reply and to welcome you as a Member.

Most sincerely,

(Sgd). Paul Howard

(Benjamin Dale, or Jimmy as we affectionately called him, died on the rostrum rehearsing his own new Symphony to be performed the next night.)

oOo

To Louis Austin (11th. Jan. 1940)

"...The Master's Schubert Songs - "To Wander" took me about four years, "Cradle Song" much less. I have just conquered "Hedge Rose", and I'm up to my neck in the "Brooklet".

Oh! the refreshing beauty of these re-creations! Louis, they are too wonderful for words.

Some critics howl about and berate the introduction of additional themes. they cannot see that these additional sounds are tinted background. The pianists do not seem to understand the real subtleties of pedaling, on which I am going to write a treatise, because all the screeds that have

appeared miss a vital point, - neither do they understand the <sup>C</sup>reation of a delicately tinted background of thought and mist, on which the Schubert song floats in a glory and charm never known before. The original pianoforte part of most Schubert songs is poor played alone, - it requires the resonance and over-tones of a glorious voice in conjunction with it, and these overtones mingle with the notes from the piano and warm them. Has that been realised? - that the piano tones are affected and coloured by the over-tones of a rich human voice?

Well, the problem is to so reconstruct the pianoforte version including the vocal part, that the piano gives the combined effect. It is achieved by a certain aspect of pedaling (never yet hinted at by teachers or visiting artists) which makes the Godowsky piano version a more beautiful experience than the listening to a great singer.

Of course it needs a perfectly adjusted sustaining pedal with the perfect damper felts, felts with expansion qualities - not like slices of turnip, - qualities too rarely met with even in the best grands. The melody notes then take on a resonance that is human, the other voices take on a softness and sympathy and a fairy background that is enthralling. To play all the notes just as they are written and give everything an equal voice is but a blasphemy - and too many do it - resulting in the effect of a player piano, a jangle of conflicting themes and notes, soulless and uninspiring.

One cannot play the songs when they have been learned, memorised and made sure in that respect, but only after a year or two of rehearsing, listening and listening and listening to get the effect.

Godowsky dealt with only 12 of the songs, and each one he has made an immortal master work of its class. I went through scores and scores of those done by Liszt who "arranged" them by the bushel, and apart from the Erl King and the Wanderer, in both of which there was little left for the arranger to do since Schubert had risen to such broad heights, they are, compared with Godowsky's transcendent inspirations, very thin. But not knowing what Godowsky's version should sound like, how they should be played, critics take upon themselves the blasphemy of fault finding.

They raise no cry at Liszt's vulgarities, at Beethoven's 20 variations on "God Save the King", - anyone can do anything they like, as shockingly as they like; but Godowsky! ah! that's another matter, - crucify him!! No wonder the poor Master found vent in his preface inside the cover of each of the songs, which is a master work in English, a master work in controversy, a master work in irony, satire; and don't the blighters deserve it..."

(Sgd). Paul."

#### APROPOS TRANSCRIPTIONS, ARRANGEMENTS, PARAPHRASES.

##### Godowsky's Preface to his Free Transcriptions of the Schubert Songs.

At the age of twenty-three I began to write the fifty-three studies on Chopin's Etudes, which have brought me so much censure and adverse criticism. In fact they were the cause of my having been labelled a technician who had sold his soul to the devil. I could not have been more misunderstood, nor could my aim and purpose have been more distorted had I been a radical reformer or a political

leader.

Some months after I had finished ten of the studies, I was visiting Camille Saint-Saens and took the opportunity to ask the master if he thought that by utilizing a great composer's work for the purpose of creating and building something new upon their foundation and thus opening unbeaten paths for further advancement and development, one was committing an act of lese majeste against the composer in particular, and art in general. His reply was terse and to the point:- All depends upon the why and how. The motive and the result of the effort determine whether or not there is justification for touching the original. When the motive is selfish exploitation, and the result is poor art, then the tampering with standard compositions is damnable.

My aim in transcribing these twelve songs of Schubert was not merely to transplant them from the voice to the piano; it was to create piano compositions out of vocal material, to comment upon and interpret the songs as a composer would treat a theme when writing free variations. I tried in vain to find a suitable term to describe correctly the character of my work. I have had to resort to the vague and colourless designation of "free transcription". To those who are open-minded, sympathetic and understanding, these Schubert versions will proclaim my love and veneration for the composer and his immortal songs.

A masterpiece is indestructible. It remains untarnished whether transcribed, arranged or paraphrased, and its intrinsic value having the necessary vitality to sustain its interest, cannot be impaired. Whenever an original composition is supplanted by versions made by others, its vulnerability is clearly demonstrated. The Chopin Etudes will always be played in their original form, regardless of the experiments which others make with them. The Bach Sonatas and Suites for Violin Alone will continue to be performed by violinists and cellists whether transcribed for piano or not. The songs of Schubert will not cease to be sung, notwithstanding all transcriptions. A transcription, an arrangement, a paraphrase, when conceived by a creative mind, is an entity, which in its own worth may prove a masterpiece. It may even surpass the composer's original work. Antagonism to such creative works discloses prejudice, narrow-mindedness, and pedantry of a Beckmesser type.

Essays are written on all kinds of subjects. Histories and biographies deal with events and people that are immutably established as any masterpiece in music. Novels are dramatized and dramas are novelized.

Why should musicians be denied the privileges of comment, criticism, dissertation, discussion and display of imagination when transcribing, arranging or paraphrasing a standard work? Why should literary men alone enjoy all the prerogatives? Shakespeare built his plays upon borrowed themes, and Moliere said: "Je prends mon bien ou je le trouve."

It is easy for the critic to strike an attitude of authority when entrenched behind the power and influences of a publication. The poor artist is like a defenceless soldier facing a machine-gun. It is so easy for the self-complacent amateur or snobbish music-lover to disseminate and propagate opinions which readily find an assenting echo to the safety there is in stagnant conventionality or moss-grown tradition.

Although I fully realise that my knowledge of music is necessarily limited when compared with the immensity of the subject, I am equally aware that many others know less than I, among whom I should place the self-appointed arbiters of what is right and wrong in our chosen art.

Deep within me dwells humility - a humbleness that I attribute to my philosophy of life. But when I have to face prejudice and ignorance which harm the art through misleading influences, my atavistic proclivities come to the fore, and my innate timidity transforms itself into irrepressible revolt. The lamb becomes a lion.

### LEOPOLD GODOWSKY.

oOo

Of the Master's treatment of Schubert's "HEDGE ROSE" I wrote to Colin Mason, (who complained of the time required to master it):-

"It is presumption to expect to put before a vulgar and musically illiterate public such a ravishing piece of Dresden China, a gem glittering with a thousand facets. The notes alone would take long to learn, but after the notation is driven in it requires a thousand repetitions with loving concentration to plumb its incomparable colouring. Then it is for presentation to the elect; to send it out in the street to earn money for you by its public dishonour is revolting; it is a morsel for the holy of holies. Yes, it does take time, but he who would scale the heights must not grudge time or sweat, and must be prepared to devote time as though he were lord of all time."

In short, as I told Godowsky (16/6/33):-

'These re-creations of Schubert Songs are outstanding in history and might have been original compositions of Schubert had he lived longer and had today's perspective.'

### ALBENIZ-GODOWSKY.

#### The God-like Charitableness of Godowsky.

A friend gave me a record of Godowsky's version of Albeniz Tango, played by John Davies, and for the first time I listened to some Godowsky idiom objectively, being the only time I have heard the Master other than from my own fingers or those of my family (all of whom I have taught), and excepting one occasion 20 years ago when Levitzki played "A Watteau Paysage" to me.

The Tango contains a couple of passages of the Master's inimitable polyphonic and polyrhythmic devices, and it gave me an exquisite thrill.

I have elsewhere commented on Godowsky's God-like charitableness (as said Liebling), and this work is an outstanding example of it. He has taken this morsel of a tune, this shivering, naked starveling, as he has so many other and more worthy ones, and nurtured it, dressed it in purple, fine linen, and royal ermine, and made it a regal little aristocrat of charm and happiness.

Godowsky was above all things a humanitarian, a giver, a lover, a kind hand to the stray. And that perhaps is why everyone who knew him loved him.

Paul Howard.

oOo

REPRINT FROM THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY - London.

March 5th. 1942.

"...I have also received recently from America a work of quite unusual interest, namely Godowsky's arrangement of the "Triana" of Albeniz from the set of piano pieces "Iberia". Some of my readers may perhaps recall some remarks of mine upon Godowsky as composer and arranger some while ago, in connection with the Godowsky Society founded by Mr. Paul Howard, the Australian pianist and musician. As a creative transcriber and arranger Godowsky occupies quite a unique place, the scope and range of his work in this respect sometimes surpassing even that of Busoni himself. As Mr. Ernest Newman, with his usual fine insight and penetration, observed some years ago when discussing this aspect of Godowsky's creative work, although based in the first instance upon another man's work, such are Godowsky's power and his inventiveness to have the power of drawing out all kinds of hitherto concealed implications in the work he "arranges" in such an inimitable manner. The Albeniz "Triana" is a remarkable specimen of work in this field. While not a bar has not undergone some subtle modification, harmonic or decorative, all kinds of fine little points have been added, pianistic expansions and amplifications, all with a consummate mastery; at the end the "Triana" emerges so glorified and enriched that the quite elaborate original sounds poor and thin by comparison: yet there is no overloading in the Godowsky version, no empty accumulation of notes, rather a re-writing and re-casting during which process all sorts of things are added, but with such taste and skill that they have to be looked for even by one to whom the original is fairly familiar. At the end of this really astonishing feat of creative musicianship one says to oneself that the Godowsky-Albeniz "Triana" sounds much more like "Triana" than it does itself.

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji."

oOo

Friend Gray-Fisk in a letter to "The Gramophone", June 1940, says of these works:-

"No pianist to my knowledge has ever publicly performed Albeniz's 'Tango' as it was originally written, for the very good reason that it is dull, colourless, lacking all pianistic interest, feebly harmonised, and contains insufficient matter to engage the mind and fingers. --- has, of course, a perfect right to prefer the original, but he must face the fact that it has been completely ousted by

the Godowsky version, and in his admirable preface to his free transcriptions of Schubert Songs, Godowsky himself provides a watertight answer to all such criticism... The case for Godowsky was also very well put by Ernest Newman in 'The Sunday Times' some years ago:- 'After all, Schubert untouched and untouched-up is always available for us when we want him, so why not meanwhile spend ten minutes enjoying Godowsky? As his fine transcriptions of the Bach unaccompanied violin and cello Suites prove, he has a remarkable faculty for drawing out of another man's work something that was not formally expressed, but is really latent in the work.'

The Albeniz 'Tango' is a minor example of Godowsky's matchless art in free transcription, paraphrasing, etc. His work in this genre includes the "Renaissance" series (Rameau, Lully, etc.) Chopin Waltzes, Strauss Waltzes, Schubert Songs, Bach Sonatas and Suites, while his 53 studies on Chopin Etudes carry piano writing to heights that have been surpassed by only one man - Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji."

oOo

Gray-Fisk in a letter to "The Musical Times", May 1, 1928:-

"Godowsky has by a process of contrapuntal super-imposition, harmonic enrichment, and general re-design of keyboard layout, transformed these Schubert and Albeniz pieces from tinkling trifles into genuine pianoforte literature which, musically and pianistically, are more interesting than the originals."

oOo

Godowsky also did wonders with "Le Cygne" (Saint-Saens). I said to Shura Hmelnitsky:-

"Poor Saint-Saens; he wrote that orchestral work, The Carnival of Animals, the 'Swan' being one of the numbers in the middle of it, and perhaps of the least value. Consequently the public got hold of it, and the pianists and cellists have hopelessly vulgarised it; the cellists have sawn it out like Hamburg sausage until it has become as odious as "Rubinstein's Melody", a gross, quarrelsome, obese and mud-bespattered bird fit only for the poulterer's block.

But Godowsky loved Saint-Saens; Paul Ulanowsky who was here with Lotte Lehmann, told me over supper in the same chair that you sat in (ah! how many have sat in that chair and have now gone to their ancestors, and many to Olympus) that his father and Godowsky were pupils together under Saint-Saens in their youth, and although S-S, had his limitations, he certainly had his qualities. It is just typical of the God-like charitableness of Godowsky that he should rescue that low-fowl (the Swan) and transform it into a bird of paradise, gracious, mystical, softly spoken, softly swaying in mysterious <sup>e</sup>nsense, quite ethereal in a glittering lake.

But didn't he love notes and counter subjects! To play it in all its perspective, polyphonic reflections is the very devil, and needs an octopus with a brain on every tentacle!

Of course any fool of a capable touring virtuoso, with the brains of a carpenter and the soul of a money lender can, with sufficient practice, stampede its notes and drive them helter-skelter across



their codfish audiences, like a machine piano at a seaside circus, but those people are not "Turners" or "Corots", nor Debussys, and they will only rape it as they rape Debussy."

oOo

From my Letter to Clinton Gray-Fisk.

"I most strongly recommend the study of the Swan which is perhaps the most delightful exercise ever written in the gentle art of listening to while you play, and individualising contrapuntal allusions and subtleties with conscious intention.

Also it is a complete reversal of the Master's treatment of the Schubert "Cradle Song", in which all the atmospheric colouring notation is pale background tint upon which Schubert's devine inspiration softly distinguishes itself.

In the Swan, the purpose has been to bury the subject forever, the listener being but dimly conscious of it through a glittering haze of sparkling lights. Truly is the bird etherealized and presented as a dream bird softly a part of fairy land.

Not in one place has Godowsky put any emphasis or even a tenuto upon a melody note, the most he has done being to make it a quarter note on the group of 16ths (and that only in one line), but as the pedal will be incessantly quivering the whole time there will be no predominance of the quarter note, but all the notes of the text from first to last are a constellation of kaleidoscopic tints, and the cow who starts to thump out the melody should be dragged off the platform and bashed on the head with a brick.

Of course there are the colourings in each voice and measure as the brighter stars here and there in the milky way, and the headlights, sparkles, polyphonic conversations, and the nuances within nuances creating a heavenly pandemonium of blissful pianissimos, only become possible when the whole of the text is used as the subject and not the original theme alone. As I say, the complete reversal of the "Cradle Song" in which all the additional voices are background.

The only possible way to ultimately achieve success is to slavishly follow Godowsky's fingering, and however unwelcome it may seem in a spot here and there, you will find afterwards that it was right."

oOo

From My Letter to A.R.

Godowsky's transcription of Chopin's F Minor Waltz sends me into a delirium of ecstasy. As Chopin left it, it was hardly worth while, it was one of his dull days, he was ill - the lovely thought was there, but that was all. And what has Godowsky made of it?! His master-hand with loving friendliness has transformed it into a thing of ravishing charm; each time a subject recurs it glistens with different lights and added charm, as a gem with a thousand facets. Only a heart full of love and the will to give can do such things. The love<sup>e</sup> if kith and kin comes more readily, or at least is to

be more expected and may reach great heights, but love for his fellow man, the complete stranger, which Godowsky showed so often, is really above this earth; it is God-like. Dear Master, and he got so little here in return.

Someone told me that the Master wrote this transcription at a time of great grief. I replied:- "The F Minor Waltz may have been written in grief, but was escape from pain, nepenthe, and I think that if it were decreed by God that time should cease and eternity remain posed upon one point of perfection, charm and loveliness, the first three measures of the page numbered four in the Chopin-Godowsky F Minor Waltz, or the line following, would supply that point."

Antonia Delores, famous soprano, daughter of the great Trebelli, spoke of Godowsky's "adornments" of other composer's works, and that it was "disrespectful" so to "trancendentalize" them. Schubert, she said, might not have liked it!! (Can you beat that?) I told her:-

"My dear Mlle. Dolores,

I have your letter accusing Godowsky!

But Isidor Philipp wrote me about the same time - 'And now he is no more with us. Since more than 40 years I have loved him. He had a commanding intellect, and something still rarer, a heart of gold, a noble soul. A great artist, and a great composer he was. It is a loss for the world and a loss for his friends. But he is surely with God!'

Ere Bach was cold his former employers and contemporaries heaped insults upon his name and work, being blind to his genius, and his work remained unknown for a century or two.

Now you would not undertake to ask someone when the opportunity offers to play one of Godowsky's compositions because...

Amazing how a few words you ridicule a modern giant whose shoes none of us are worthy to touch. But in those words you also sweepingly condemn and brush off the roll of honour all the greatest composers in history including Bach himself.

X For Bach set the example, in that his "<sup>n</sup>Adante" for violin alone he reset for piano as a movement in one of his Sonatas for piano, and a thoroughly bad job he made of it; anything more poverty-stricken could scarcely be found in the works of Bach or anyone else whereas Cyril Scott's arrangement of the same thing for piano is beautiful, and beyond doubt expresses what was in Bach's thoughts.

Bach also took Muffat's Florilegium, entire theme, harmony and all, and used it with developments and variations as a movement for his pianoforte Italian Concerto.

So you automatically condemn Bach for these and other numerous examples he set. I do not, for they all did the same thing. What did a theme matter, whose it was? What one did with it was what mattered.

Saint-Saens settled the question personally for Godowsky, saying - "it all depends on why and how".

You completely ignore the Master's eloquent Preface to the Schubert Song transcriptions; as a matter of fact you never saw it, or the transcriptions themselves either, but lightly damn immortal works ex-parte.

Your condemnation sweeps along Chopin, for his variations on "La ci darum la mano", Schumann, Liszt, who "arranged" for piano nearly all Schubert's songs, and a poor job he made of them except in one or two cases, and wrote Piano Etudes on the Paganini Etudes; Your anathema annihilates Saint-Saens, Ravel for his Tomneau de Couperin, Debussy for his Homage to Rameau, Cesar Franck, Glinka, Wagner, Brahms (who made a piano version of Bach's "Chaconne" from one of the sonatas for violin alone), and Beethoven for his 33 Variations on a tune by Diabelli, for his 12 Pianoforte Variations on Eine Madschen from the Magic Flute, - the young and unknown Beethoven should have paused before violating the work of the immortal Mozart, ah? But you couldn't stop him, he wrote hundreds of Variations on everyone's operas, songs, and God save us, even a set of Variations on "God Save the King", or was it the Queen?

In the case of such crimes you would say we really should refuse to listen to the String Quartettes or the 9th Symphony, and the Beethoven Association, so difficult to gain admission to, should be disbanded.

But many of those arrangements were mere manufactured stuff, inconsequent, if clever play with the other fellow's material, not the exquisite, cultured, inspired soul food of Godowsky.

Schubert too, you pillory, for didn't the vandal presume to write his tunes to the immortal poems of Heine, Goethe, Schiller and others? And some of them didn't like it either. In fact, when poor Schubert sent a copy of his Erl King to the author with a letter, it was ignored.

As far as that is concerned, how dare Goethe write his jingle around the immortal legend of the Erl King, which till then was but a sinister, shuddering fear, only haltingly whispered in the dark?

Dear Dolores, you have stirred up one devil of a row, haven't you? By the time we finish on your lines there won't be any Christian civilization left!

You must, dear lady, consider yourself a veritable lord of life and death. A striking example of "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

You, of course, automatically condemn Myra Hess for her beautiful arrangement of Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring", and Cyril Scott for his lovely setting of "My Heart Ever Faithful", and Leonard Borwick for his Bach arrangements. I remember you saying to me that Borwick was a dull man, but I reply that he was a sincere artist who did not play for the hoi polloi.

I wonder whether you approve Gounod's writing a sloppy tune, an "Ave Maria", and using Bach's immortal, chaste and sacrosanct 1st. Prelude of the 48, as an accompaniment to it!!! Any greater crime than that cheap Frenchman's presumption in doing that is inconceivable, a mountainous

impertinence. But perhaps you like the Ave Maria and have sung it yourself. Sure "They strain at gnats who swallow camels". Forgive me if I am wrong.

Now let us come to Godowsky's elaborations of the <sup>B</sup>bach works for violin alone.

You misinterpret my expression "pianistic skyscrapers". The term <sup>1</sup>does not mean the concert paraphrases of a vulgar Liszt. You do not know and have not seen any of the works referred to, and anyway would probably be quite incapable of judging their merits. This <sup>5</sup>is quite respectfully assuming that you are not a deeply learned scholar in counterpoint.

X Their merits <sup>6</sup>were fully dealt with in the Musical Courier of May 13th, 1924. The works constitute the greatest thing that has ever been done in that direction, and might well rouse the envy of Bach, for they represent from the first note to the last, Bach at his very best. They contain no Godowsky, they are an absolute homage to Bach. That is the opinion of all the world's greatest pedagogues, pianists and critics. They enriched the repertoire of Bach big works for the piano, and brought to the public what they otherwise would never hear. As violin works they serve little purpose, as they are so <sup>7</sup>seldom played (Sorabji calls them grinning skeletons); and critics as a rule get up and go out till they are finished, as they hold little attraction musically, especially with today's unsuitable bow which turns chords into arpeggios most <sup>8</sup>pitifully. The works were only intended as supertechnic exercises for super students.

You do not know and do not play the works of Bach. To "tell me" in the terms <sup>m</sup>you have adopted is a personal insult to me, for I can at any moment give about 4 whole Bach programmes to the public. In addition to this I have played upon the piano every work, every note written by Bach for the piano, and also most of his vocal works before the copies passed into the shelves beside the piano. I possess Bach's entire works in nearly every existing edition, and have studied the conflicting opinions of different editors. You have not that knowledge; my reverence for Bach far exceeds yours.

Many years ago as organist at St. Ignatius Church (Jesuit) while you were still at convent school, I played many of Bach's organ works, and later played the same <sup>9</sup>works on piano as transcribed by Liszt, Busoni, d'Albert, Tausig and others. All of these gentlemen are, of course, automatically condemned by you to a vat of boiling oil.

When I was a boy I whistled the songs of Schumann, Schubert, and Brahms, and I played the piano parts. It developed my love of melody. I cannot sing. Am I to be deprived of the sound of these songs till you come and sing them to me, or Lotte Lehmann comes once in a couple of decades? If I play them and include the <sup>v</sup>vocal part on the piano as written, the effect is poor because Schubert was not a great writer for piano, he did not know what the piano would become, nor what fingers could attain.

Therefore may I not, if capable, add such atmosphere to the setting as Schubert would have added had he conceived them as piano works and had the benefit of greater learning and today's piano, and the superior subtleties of today's fingers? No?

Or, if another, an incomparable genius, can re-set them for piano, with such wizardry that they glow with heavenly radiance, cameo-like beauty, that stirs the heart and inspires, shall that other not be thanked and praised, and may I not play them? No?

Thank you so much, - that is nice of you. Like Hitler, you won't let others worship their own God.

But Rosa Widder wrote me: "No, I cannot calm down, he is always before me, and it may be sacrilege to say that never was there a phase in my life which has given me that feeling of pride, ecstasy - nothing that carried with it that uplift into another sphere - as that derived from my association with the greatest of masters. He was a source of inspiration not only musically - his nobility of mind - his aristocracy of hearing - his benevolence of heart, kindness, simplicity, understanding..."

And I felt that too, and although I never met him, I had for him a reverence and a personal affection and protective instinct I have never known for any other human than my close kin. And it was reciprocated by his great heart.

If you do not like my Billingsgate - and you certainly asked for it - read G.K. Chesterton on Cobbett. In case you don't know Chesterton, he is, or was, God rest his soul, a most distinguished convert to the faith, and one of the greatest writers of our day.

And now you should go to Notre Dame and in a quiet corner say a Rosary for the repose of the soul of poor Godowsky, and reciprocate for my constant prayers for your departed Zelig.

If you can answer any or all of this, do. I will play cricket with you.

To soften your indignation I enclose a little poem by another Chesterton.

God bless you,

(Sgd). Paul Howard."

(I will relate the lady's answer later. P.H.)

oOo

Finally, a word of warning: as I wrote to Leonard Lieblich (13/4/42):-

"We shall need to float the Master's original works into world consciousness now, or who knows but the whirligig of disruption may conceal his priceless gift to humanity.

In emphasising the original compositions, I am not in the least wishing to detract from his immortal Recreations, Paraphrases, Renaissance, etc., but what I feel is that while he has surpassed everyone in such works as these, it is in greater measure still that he has surpassed all his predecessors and contemporaries in his original compositions, and that if they are established, the others will take care

of themselves: but if only the paraphrases, etc., are hammered and battered, the players of them, lacking a true understanding of the Godowsky idiom, will not understand how to play his original works, which will then not be sought after.

But the pianists cling to the paraphrases because in some cases the basis of them is the old technique that they know, with the Godowsky idiom usually more lightly superimposed. Playing these works is a cheap way of gaining a reputation of being a Godowsky player, using his name without having to master the technique necessary for his original compositions.

If they must play paraphrases, let them do the 5th Strauss Metamorphosis, 21 pages of polyphony for the left hand alone, which indeed would be something to their credit. The Master told me it is his most ambitious work for the left."

oOo

There are other "transcendentalizations" also, but this Instalment has already become lengthy.

Of the Master's elaboration of the Bach violin Sonatas and cello Suites we must speak later.

Till my next, dear Member,

Ever yours,

Paul Howard.